

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

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TAGS: PINT ID

SUBJ: TRIAL OF "POP" MAGAZINE EDITOR FOR CRIMINAL

LIBEL OF SUHARTO OPENS

REF: A. JAKARTA A-187 10/6/74 B. JAKARTA 003

1. SUMMARY: THE EDITOR OF POP MAGAZINE, REY HANITIO, HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN JAKARTA ON CHARGES OF PUBLISHING A DEFAMATORY ARTICLE LAST OCTOBER WHICH CLAIMED THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO IS OF ROYAL BIRTH (REF A). AT THE OPENING SESSION ON JANUARY 15, HANITIO DENIED THE INDICTMENT, WHICH CLAIMED AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT THE POP ARTICLE CREATED MISTRUST TOWARD THE PRESIDENT, AND THEREFORE AGAINST THE STATE. THE TRIAL AGAINST HANITIO--AN OBSCURE 35-YEAR-OLD JOURNALIST--IS APPARENTLY SYMBOLIC OF A LARGER AND STILL OBSCURE POLITICAL DRAMA WHICH BEGAN WHEN SUHARTO EXPLODED OVER THE POP ARTICLE LAST OCTOBER 28. MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE ALI MURTOPO, WHOSE "OPSUS" ORGANIZATION CONTROLLED THE DISGRACED POP, IS THE REAL DEFENDENT IN THE POP AFFAIR, AND THAT THE TRIAL IS ANOTHER SIGN THAT SUHARTO MAY STILL BE DISPLEASED WITH MURTOPO. END SUMMARY

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2. AS REPORTED REFAIR, SUHARTO ANGRILY DENIED THE POP ARTICLE (WHICH SAID HE WAS THE SON OF A NOBLEMAN AND RELATED TO THE SULTANATE OF YOGJAKARTA) AS A SUB-VERSIVE ATTACK ON HIS PRESIDENCY AND NATIONAL STABILITY. THE FACT THAT POP WAS OWNED BY MURTOPO'S OPSUS AND THAT SUHARTO NOTED THE OPSUS CONNECTION IN HIS EMOTIONAL ATTACK ON THE ARTICLE, LED TO SPECULATION THAT THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS WERE USING THE INCIDENT AS A WARNING TO MURTOPO TO CURB HIS CONTROVERSIAL ACTIVITIES. THIS HYPOTHESIS, THOUGH HARDLY PROVED, WAS REINFORCED WHEN SUHARTO'S FAMILY HIRED TASRIF--THE LAWYER WHO BRILLIANTLY BUT UNSUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED JANUARY 15 DETAINEE HARIMAN SIREGAR--TO BRING ANOTHER, A PRIVATE LAWSUIT AGAINST THE OPSUS-CONTROLLED POP. MANY INTERPRETED THIS AS ANOTHER REBUKE BY SUHARTO AGAINST OPSUS AND MURTOPO, WHO ARE, IMPLICITLY, THE PRINCIPAL ANTAGOINSTS OF SIREGAR AND THE OTHER JANUARY 15 DETAINEES).

3. THE GOVERNMENT'S CHOICE OF JANUARY 15, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE JAKARTA RIOTS, FOR OPENING THE TRIAL AGAINST POP'S EDITOR, IS ANOTHER COINCIDENCE, WHICH SURELY HAS POLITICAL MEANING. PERHAPS IT MERELY SYMBOLIZES THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH ALL ACTS THAT DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT OR THE PRESIDENT. OTHERS ARGUE THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF THE POP TRIAL WITH THE JANUARY RIOTS, IN WHICH MURTOPO WAS ONE OF THE PROTAGONISTS, IS PART OF A CONTINUING ANTI-MURTOPO CAMPAIGN. (SEE ALSO REF B FOR INTELLIGENCE CHIEF GENERAL YOGA'S COMMENTS TENDING TO MINIMIZE MURTOPO'S POSITION).

4. IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE ARE SIGNS THAT MURTOPO'S ARCH-ENEMY, GENERAL SUMITRO, WHO WAS THE BIGGEST LOSER IN THE JANUARY AFFAIR, MAY BE UNDERGOING A SLOW PROCESS OF REHABILITATION. FOR EXAMPLE, SUHARTO RECENTLY HONORED SUMITRO BY ATTENDING HIS DAUGHTER'S WEDDING AND BY GIVING THE BRIDE AWAY (REPORTEDLY SUHARTO ASKED SUMITRO IF HE COULD DO THIS). THE PRESIDENT'S PARTICIPATION WAS WIDELY PUBLICIZED AND CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS A GESTURE OF UNDOUBTED POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. ANOTHER SIGN OF A POSSIBLE SUMITRO RESURRECTION ARE REPORTS-- STILL UNCONFIRMED--THAT SUHARTO WANTS THE EX DEPUTY DEFENSE AND KOPKAMTIB CHIEF TO RETURN TO PUBLIC LIFE, THOUGH IN A REDUCED CAPACITY, AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY COUNCIL. NEWSOM

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